

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for stretching the muscles in the chest, shoulder, neck and upper back to relieve tension related muscle problems comprising:

a) A platform ~~comprising a generally flat longitudinally extending area comprising a top surface and a bottom surface wherein the top surface is padded for a user's~~ comfort;

b) A plurality of legs attached to the bottom surface of the platform ~~for positioning the device at an angle to a horizontal surface;~~ and

c) A rotating handle bar slidably attached to the bottom surface of the platform and adapted to allow the user to stretch his or her muscles by gripping the handle bar while slidably moving the handle bar from a retracted position to an extended position and from the extended position to the retracted position, wherein the ~~through~~ sliding movement of the handle bar from the retracted position to the extended position and from the extended position from the retracted position is in a direction generally ~~perpendicular~~ parallel to the ~~top~~ surface of the platform.

2. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 1 whereby the handle bar is adapted to be rotated to a series of fixed positions relative to the top surface of the platform ~~so as to increase or decrease the stretching movements of the user.~~

3. (Original) The device according the Claim 2 whereby the device is further adapted to provide resistance when the handle bar is slidingly moved by the user.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for stretching chest, shoulder, neck and upper back muscles of a patient to relieve tension related muscle problems comprising;

a) Providing a device comprising a platform ~~having comprising a generally flat longitudinally extending area comprising a top surface and a bottom surface wherein the top surface is padded for the patient's comfort, a plurality of legs, attached to the bottom surface of the platform for positioning the device at an angle to a horizontal surface and a rotating handle bar, wherein the rotating handle bar is~~ slidingly attached to ~~the bottom of~~ the platform and adapted to allow the patient to stretch his or her muscles through sliding movement of the handle bar in a direction generally ~~perpendicular~~ parallel to the surface top of the platform;

b) Positioning the patient on the platform of the device;

c) Engaging the patient in stretching exercises by ~~setting the~~ rotating the handle bar to a position relative to the top of the platform; and

d) Directing the patient to slidingly move the rotating handle bar in the direction generally parallel to the surface ~~a plurality of times~~ to stretch out muscles.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 4 whereby the patient engages in progressively more strenuous exercises by ~~setting the~~ rotating the handle bar to positions that create progressively more strenuous exercise.

6. (Original) The method according to Claim 4 whereby the device is adapted to provide resistance during the stretching exercises.

7. (Original) The method according the Claim 6 whereby the patient engages in progressively more strenuous exercises by increasing the amount of resistance.

8. (New) A muscle stretching device, comprising:

a. a platform having a top surface, a bottom surface, and at least one platform track connected to the bottom surface; and

b. a handle bar connected to at least one handle bar track, wherein the at least one handle bar track slidingly

engages the at least one platform track, and the handle bar is rotatable with respect to the top surface of the platform.

9. (New) The muscle stretching device of claim 8, wherein the handle bar is rotatable to a plurality of pre-selected positions.

10. (New) A muscle stretching device, comprising:

a. a platform having a length, a width, and a surface defining a plane, wherein the length defines a lengthwise direction and the length is greater than the width;

b. a handle bar operatively connected to the platform, wherein the handle bar is slideable in the lengthwise direction and rotatable with respect to the plane.

11. (New) A muscle stretching device, comprising:

a. a platform having a top surface, a bottom surface, and a platform connector attached to the bottom surface;

b. a handle bar having a handle bar connector, the handle bar connector slidably engaging the platform connector beneath the bottom surface of the platform, wherein the handle bar is rotatable with respect to the plane.

12. (New) A method of stretching the muscles for use by a person, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. lying on a platform, the platform having a surface defining a plane;
- b. gripping a handle bar;
- c. sliding the handle bar away from the platform in a direction generally parallel to the plane.

13. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of rotating the handle bar to a first pre-selected position with respect to the plane before the sliding step.

14. (New) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of rotating the handle bar to a second pre-selected position with respect to the plane, and again sliding the handle bar away from the platform in a direction generally parallel to the plane.

15. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the handle bar is connected to a handle bar track, the platform is connected to a platform track, and the handle bar track slidably engages the platform track.

16. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the handle bar defines a plurality of fixed handle bar locations, and the step of gripping the handle bar comprises gripping the handle bar at a first one of the handle bar locations.

17. (New) The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of gripping the handle bar at a second one of the fixed handle bar locations and again sliding the handle bar away from the platform in a direction generally parallel to the plane.

18. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising placing the platform on a horizontal surface such that the platform and the horizontal surface define an acute angle.

19. (New) A muscle stretching device, comprising:

- a. a platform having a surface;
- b. a handle bar, the handle bar being rotatable with respect to the platform surface;
- c. means for slidably engaging the handle bar and the platform.